BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN BIOTECHNOLOGY, PHARMACY AND LIFE SCIENCES

HEALTHCARE BIOTECHNOLOGY

In Spain the development of ageing medicine presents an excellent business opportunity because the population over 65 years is growing rapidly and it is estimated that by 2050 Spain will be the country in the world with the oldest population, with an average age of 55 years old. Spanish biotechnology companies are actively developing a portfolio in aging related illness such as Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s diseases for example. Generating another opportunity for foreign companies because they can acquire licences to develop products for the local or global markets.

Regarding the personalized medicine area, Spanish biotech sector has recognized the potential of this area of business with the existence of a relatively large amount of companies with a leading proposition in this sector.

Investing in personalized medicine in Spain is a good opportunity for foreign companies mainly due to that Spain has advanced research institutions, both public and private, specialized in the development of novel diagnostic technologies, search of biomarkers, the development of microarrays, gene silencing and personalized therapies representing a good opportunity for foreign companies to strengthen their product or technology portfolio by licensing.

In addition, Spain has a lot of important competitive advantages in order to became a worldwide competitive pole in advanced therapies thanks to its extensive network of public and private hospitals and 64 Biobanks, belonging to the National Biobanks Network, offering and extensive access to infrastructures, patients, research centers, etc. that will be very useful to establish more productive value chains and foster research alliances. Both Spain and European Union have a strong regulation to promote biomedical research and advanced therapies.
Spain also has a **Cell Therapy Network** since 2006 formed by 27 research groups, 6 associated clinical groups and 160 researchers spread all over the country. The Network has the goal to transfer to the National Healthcare System the new advances and discoveries developed.

About **biotechnology research and development pipeline**, in Spain the development of new therapies, vaccines or drugs in the fight against **cancer** presents an excellent business opportunity. Spain has a solid **network of hospitals** that provides access to infrastructure and patients – the key resources for clinical trials. Furthermore it has excellent **research centres** (e.g., CNIO) and **universities** with advanced oncology research. Spain is among the first countries in the world by number of clinical trials, mainly in Phase II and Phase III.

**CLINICAL TRIALS**

Clinical research is an excellent opportunity in Spain and this also applies to other **investments in healthcare projects** that support the clinical testing sector and healthcare services in general.

The **high quality–cost benefit** of clinical trials in Spain is a highly attractive feature of the local market when compared to other European member states. **Several large pharmaceutical companies have chosen Spain** for broad clinical trials during the development of new drugs.

Spain offers basic support for this business thanks to its **solid and extensive hospital network**, which covers the entire country. One important resource is the **biobanks** associated with healthcare centres. These allow fast access to **numerous biological samples** from diverse patients with different study indicators.

In fact, there are more than **800 hospitals** in Spain where researchers can implement complete clinical trials – from Phase I to Phase III or IV. In addition Spain has an **extensive scientific and medical collaboration network**, entailing universities, technology centres and healthcare centres.

Spain has a **top regulatory and clinical trial register system**. The Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Policy, through the Spanish Medicine and
Healthcare Products Agency (AEMPS), has developed an online software application to expedite and simplify authorisation of new clinical testing.

**GENERICs AND BIOSIMILAR PRODUCTS**

The generics market in Spain is still in its early days but the outlook is encouraging. The Spanish Ministry of Health supports generic drugs and hopes they increase their market share in order to reduce the costs of the national healthcare system. In fact, the government promotes the use of generic products, boosting the long-term demand for such drugs. This presents a unique opportunity for newcomers in this sector.

Recent regulatory changes in Spain, introduced to decrease public Healthcare spending, are a strong driver for generics and biosimilars growth. Spanish regional Governments are already starting to increase the use of this type of products due to their lower prices.

Foreign firms see Spain as a niche market or as a place to increase an existing presence with eyes on the entire European market for generic drugs. In continental Europe the generics market is still growing. Furthermore in the coming years patents will expire on 20% of protected drugs. This will lead to an increase in the demand for generics in Europe and around the world. And Spain is an attractive entry point for this market because it has low R&D and low production and distribution costs for such products.

In the case of biosimilars, Europe leads the way in regulating these drugs compared to other regions of the world. Spain presents an extremely appropriate scenario for rapid regulatory development, especially in the case of product portfolios of companies in countries where the approval process for biosimilars is much slower (eg, America). In addition GMP production for biosimilars can be set up in Spain in a cost-effective manner.

**INDUSTRIAL BIOPROCESSES**

Spain has a large number of biotechnological companies specialized in
the manufacturing and commercialization of enzymes, microorganisms, cell lines, the manufacturing to third parties using fermentation and biocatalysis, the manufacturing of polymers, the manufacturing of biofuels or the development of biotechnological equipment.

This sector in Spain has over 200 products/technologies in the pipeline, most of which are in industrial scale up phase or ready to market and focused on bioprocesses. There are important research centers all over Spain working on industrial biotechnology.

Spain has broad user markets, both for chemical, pharmaceutical and energy or food sectors. Paper and wood, textile, detergent processing and food production industries are also potential customers for this technology, and Spain has a high development in these sectors.

However, in the case of Spain is still a young and developing technology, which is a great investment opportunity in markets with high growth potential.

MARINE BIOTECHNOLOGY

Marine biotech is an attractive arena for investment in Spain in view of the great biodiversity of marine species on its coasts and in its seas, including the Mediterranean, the Atlantic coast of Galicia and the Cantabrian Sea.

Through its domestic companies Spain has started to create value from marine biotechnology and it is ready to develop new innovative projects with foreign investors.

Spain, being a country surrounded by sea, has a long experience in marine biology. This biodiversity knowledge is an important factor of value for any R&D initiative in the sector. There are important marine research centres along the entire Spanish coast. These are a source of human resources, technology and expert knowledge, which are valuable factors for the marine biotechnology plans of foreign companies.
HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGIES

Spain offers a huge potential for the development of sanitary technologies due to its high potential markets. Spain is the sixth largest market in Europe, only behind France, the Netherlands, UK, Germany and Italy and has an intense exporting activity for the rest of Europe and USA.

The Spanish biotechnology sector currently has more than 100 products/technologies on this area in different development stages. The sector is dominated by local companies with 75% of the market share, while multinational enterprises account for the remaining 25%.

The Spanish industry currently has all the capacities and technological resources required for the development of highly innovative solutions in the medical device sector. From the computational design of novel products, to the development of biomaterials for its application in implantable devices or the development of improvement procedures to avoid corrosion and wear on metallic prosthesis, Spain offers broad opportunities for the co-development and value creation on medical technologies.